

Remarks

The above Amendments and these Remarks are in reply to the Office Action mailed February 22, 2005. Claims 1-18 were pending when the Office Action was issued.

Claims 3 and 10 are currently being canceled, and claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 11 and 16-18 are currently being amended, leaving claims 1-2, 4-9 and 11-18 for examination.

I. Double Patenting

Claims 9-11 and 14-17 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1, 6 and 11 of U.S. Patent No. 6,713,026. Since these claims have been amended (and claim 10 has been canceled), Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be reconsidered in view of the amended claims.

Claim 16 was provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 8 and 4 of co-pending U.S. Patent Application No. 10/074,379. Since claim 16 has been amended, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be reconsidered in view of the amended claim 16.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner review the pending claims in U.S. Patent Application No. 10/023,197 when considering the claims in the present application. It is Applicants' understanding that such co-pending claims should be available to the Examiner using the PAIR system.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

In the Office Action, claims 1-8 and 18 were indicated to be allowed, and claims 12 and 13 were indicated to be allowable. Many of these claims have been amended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that these claims, as amended, be examined.

III. Conclusion

The Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned if he can assist in any way in expediting issuance of a patent.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any underpayment of fees or credit any overpayment of fees to Deposit Account No. 06-1325 (order no. SHPR-01041USX) for any matter in connection with this response, including any fee for extension of time, which may be required.

Respectfully submitted,

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